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SUB: BIO: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES; AU TRUONG THANH-VU VAN MUYEN

REF: A) SAIGON 76 B) SAIGON 154

1. THANH IS A 42- YEAR OLD SOUTHERN ECONOMIST WHO HAS SERVED AS MINISTER OF THE ECONOMY UNDER THREE POST-DIEM GOVERNMENTS. MUYEN IS A 55 YEAR OLD NORTHERN CONFUCIENIST LAWYER AND POLITICIAN.

2. THANH WAS BORN IN 1925. HIS CAMPAIGN BIOGRAPHY SAYS HE WAS BORN IN SAIGON OF A POOR FAMILY ; OTHER SOURCES INDICATE HIS FATHER IS CHINESE AND HE WAS BORN IN GO

CONG PROVINCE, SOUTH OF SAIGON. HE IS AN UNCLE OF THE LATE COL. PHAM NGOC THAO.

3. THANH ATTENDED CHASSELOUP-LAUBAT LYCEE IN SAIGON AND IS NOW A MEMBER OF THE SOUTHERN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (LIEN TRUONG). HE STUDIED AGRICULTURE IN HANOI DURING THE WAR AND EARNED A DOCTORATE IN ECONOMICS AND HIGHER STUDIES OF PUBLIC LAW IN 1951 FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS, WHERE HE REPORTEDLY WAS INFLUENCED BY MARXIST ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONCEPTS. RETURNING TO VIET-NAM HE JOINED THE FACULTY OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAIGON. HE LEFT VIET-NAM AND SPENT A FEW MONTHS IN FRANCE AFTER THE GENEVA ACCORDS IN 1954.

4. ON HIS RETURN TO SAIGON THANH IS SAID TO HAVE BECOME INVOLVED WITH ATTEMPTS TO REQUEST THE INTERNATIONAL

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CONTROL COMMISSION TO RELEASE MEMBERS OF THE LEFTIST MOVEMENT FOR THE DEFENSE OF PEACE, THOUGH HE DENIED BEING A MEMBER. IN 1955 HE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMMITTEE FOR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION OF THE PROPERTIES, LIVES AND SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE, AN ORGANIZATION WHICH INCLUDED A NUMBER OF PEOPLE NOW ACTIVE IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT. IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME THAT HE WAS DISMISSED FROM SAIGON UNIVERSITY BECAUSE OF ALLEGED TROTSKYITE CONNECTIONS.

5. IN JUNE 1955 THANH AGAIN WENT TO PARIS, BUT HE RETURNED IN 1956 AND TOOK PART IN A RESEARCH GROUP WHICH PREPARED A VIETNAMESE ENCYCLOPEDIA. IN 1957 HE BECAME CHAIRMAN OF THE SAIGON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, LEAVING THAT JOB IN 1958 TO SET UP A PRIVATE CONSULTING BUSINESS IN ACCOUNTING. IN SEPTEMBER 1958 HE ORGANIZED AND HEADED A DELEGATION OF VIETNAMESE BUSINESSMEN TO STUDY AGRARIAN REFORM METHODS IN TAIWAN.

6. IN 1960 THANH WAS BELIEVED TO BE LINKED WITH A GROUP OF NEUTRALISTS, INCLUDING HIS PRESENT RUNNING MATE HUYEN, WHICH URGED REMOVAL OF HO CHI MINH AND NGO DINH DIEM, TO BE FOLLOWED BY FREE ELECTIONS AND A FEDERATION. IN THAT YEAR THE DIEMIST POLICE PICKED UP THANH BRIEFLY AND QUESTIONED HIM REGARDING ALLEGED VIET CONG CONNECTIONS, BUT RELEASED HIM SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

7. IN NOVEMBER 1963 THANH WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NATIONAL ECONOMY BY THE NGUYEN NGOC THO GOVERNMENT, AND AFTER THE NGUYEN KHANH COUP OF FEBRUARY 1964 HE REMAINED AS MINISTER OF THE ECONOMY, LEAVING IN THE RESHUFFLE OF NOVEMBER 1964. IN JULY 1965 HE WAS ELECTED DIRECTOR OF THE NEWLY FORMED NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSITITUTE, SET UP TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND RECOMMEND POLICIES IN THE FIELDS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEFELOPMENT. IN 1965 AND 1966 HE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE FOUNDING OF THE MOVEMENT FOR THE RENAISSANCE OF THE SOUTH, A SOUTHERN-ORIENTED POLITICAL PARTY.

8. IN FEBRUARY 1966 PREMIER KY NAMED THANH TO THE POST OF COMMISSIONER FOR ECONOMY, JCD COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE. HE DISPLAYED FIRMNESS, INTELLIGENCE, AND ENERGY IN BRINGING THE ECONOMY UNDER CONTROL, NOTABLY THROUGH THE PIASTER DEVALUATION AND RELATED

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MEASURES. IN OCTOBER 1966 HE RETURNED FROM AN INTER-NATIONAL MONETARY FUND MEETING AND DISCUSSIONS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON TO JUMP INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE CABINET CRISIS THEN TAKING PLACE BETWEEN PREMIER KY AND SEVERAL SOUTHERN MINISTERS. THANH RESIGNED, CLAIMING HE WAS DOING SO BECAUSE OF NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL LOAN'S POLICE-STATE TACTICS AND BECAUSE OF MILITARY CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMY. HE LEFT IN A STORM OF RECRIMINATIONS. SINCE THEN HE WAS THOUGHT TO BE HELPING TO ORGANIZE THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF TRAN VAN HUONG. THE FILING OF PAPERS FOR HIS OWN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY WAS NOT GENERALLY ANTICIPATED.

9. HUYEN WAS BORN IN 1912 IN HA NAM, NORTHERN VIET-NAM. HE STUDIED LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HANOI AND BECAME A LAWYER THERE. IN 1944-45 HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE HAIPHONG COURT OF JUSTICE, CONCURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF HAIPHONG CITYAND LEADER OF THE CITY'S PROGRESSIVE YOUTH MOVEMENT.

10. IN 1945 HUYEN JOINED THE VIET MINH, SERVING AS GENERAL PROSECUTOR OF THE HANOI COURT OF JUSTICE AND UNDERGROUND CHIEF JUSTICE FOR ZONES II AND III. HE WAS CAPTURED BY THE FRENCH IN 1947 AND JAILED IN HANOI, BUT AFTER HIS RELEASE HE RETURNED TO THE MAQUIS. HIS CAMPAIGN BIOGRAPHY INDICATES THAT HE OPPOSED THE CREATION OF PEOPLES COURTS AND THE CONFIS-CATION OF THE CULT LAND PROPERTIES AND LEFT THE VIET MINH IN 1951 AND RETURNEDNJO HANOI.

11. FOR TWO YEARS HE MADE A LIVING IN SELLING BICYCLE PARTS. IN 1953 HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE NEWLY CREATED VIETNAMESE BAR AND WAS ACTIVE IN THE NATIONAL CONGRESS DRAFTING OF A STATEMENT OF VIETNAMESE NON- ADHERENCE TO THE FRENCH UNION. IN 1954 HE WAS AN EXTRAGOVERNMENTAL OBSERVER FROM NORTH VIET-NAM TO THE FRANCO-VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATIONS. HE CAME SOUTH IN 1955 AND JOINED THE SAIGON BAR. IN 1957 HE WAS CLOSELY LINKED WITH DR. PHAN QUANG DAN IN HIS DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND IN 1958 HE DEFENDED DR. DAN AND THOI LUAN NEWPAPER AGAINST GOVERNMENT LIBEL CHARGES. HE HAS ALSO BEEN AN ADVISER TO THE VIETNAM CHRISTIAN WORKERS. HE MAY HAVE ALSO HAD CONNECTIONS WITH THE VNQDD IN 1959, AND IN 1960 HE WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LINKED WITH AU TRUONG THANH AND OTHERS AS A NEUTRALIST URGING THE REMOVAL OF NO

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CHI MINH AND NGO DINH DIEM, TO BE FOLLOWED BY FREE ELECTIONS AND A FEDERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

12. AFTER THE NOVEMBER 1963 COUP HUYEN SERVED ON THE COUNCIL OF NOTABLES. HE IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORTING THE BUDDHIST VAN HANH UNIVERSITY, AND THERE IS ANOTHER REPORT THAT HE IS A MEMBER OF THE CATHOLIC PACIFIST SONG DAO GROUP.

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